

PRESS RELEASE

Release Date: **April 7, 2008**
Release Number: **SDOPR-08-18**

Media Contact: **Carol Andersen (206) 553-7315**
Internet Address: www.sba.gov/wa

Kusak Cut Glass Works, Inc. Seattle
Named SBA Family-Owned Small Business of the Year
Celebration honoring winners on April 29th - Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, Seattle Center

SEATTLE – The U.S. Small Business Administration's Seattle District Office has named **Kusak Cut Glass Works, Inc., Seattle WA** as the **2008 Washington State & Region 10 (WA, OR, ID, AK) Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Small Business of the Year**. This award honors a family-owned and operated business which has been passed on from one generation to another. The owner must also serve as a majority owner and operator or bear principal responsibility for operating a small business with at least a 15-year track record. Kusak Cut Glass Works operates in the Rainier Valley area of Seattle. Its single facility hosts both retail and manufacturing operations. Their high-end products range from crystal stemware and barware, decorative vases and chandeliers, to commercial awards and trophies.

Kusak Cut Glass Works was established in 1914 by a young Moravian glasscutter, Anton C. Kusak Sr., who arrived in the United States with \$12. He was a trained freehand glass engraver who learned his trade in Austria during the early 1900s. Fast forward to 2008 and third generation owner Anton C. (Chuck) Kusak III continues to honor his grandfather and father by operating the family business with the same values and purpose. Chuck is currently in his 38th year serving as President and CEO of Kusak Cut Glass Works Inc. His wife Christine works by his side and also acts as Human Resources Manager.

Chuck has learned over the years that it is an honor and privilege to own and run an independent family-owned business. He also knows with this privilege comes tremendous responsibility to keep Kusak's personal and business integrity at the highest level. Chuck believes that he is blessed to be surrounded with a wonderful and gifted group of fellow workers who allow him to follow in his grandfather's and father's footsteps.

The family business has faced and survived adversity including two world wars, the Great Depression and numerous market and economic changes. Business prospered for 70 years but changes in the marketplace forced Kusak's to search for new outlets to sell crystal products. During the 80's Chuck expanded the product lines to include: Corporate Solutions - awards and recognition for local and national companies, and Tournament Championship Crystal for the golf and tennis industry across the country. Looking at trends in the market and a willingness to change and adapt has kept Kusak's a business focused on good service and the highest of quality in fine crystal products. They continue to grow at a steady pace with yearly sales in excess of 1 million per year. The majority of retail sales income is derived from golf courses, country clubs and dozens of corporations across the United States. A small percentage of retail sales income is made from sales to individuals throughout the year and during Kusak's semi-annual sale held in the spring and fall. Wholesale sales are generally made by fine jewelry and gift shops.

Kusak's provides a great environment for employees to work and shares its profits. They currently employ 9 full-time personnel and 3 part-time employees who otherwise consider themselves retired. Employee turnover is low with an average of 18.6 years an employee has been with the company.

Continuing his family's tradition of philanthropy, Chuck serves as both fund raiser and business consultant with a host of non-profit boards both locally and nationally. They include: the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of WA and AK, the Boy Scouts of America, and the United Way of King County. Chuck proudly is a Director for the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce. He is also a part of the Western Golf Association of Chicago, where he is currently a board member for the Evans Caddie program which grants full scholarships to college students attending 17 major universities across the country, including the University of Washington.

The Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Small Business Award is proudly presented to Anton C. Kusak III of Kusak Cut Glass Works, Inc. for maintaining a reputation of integrity and high quality products and services. With his grandfather's vision, Chuck Kusak continues to adapt to the ever changing market, using fine handmade crystal as a medium for continued success.